# CHAPTER VIII

## CHINA AGAIN UNDER CHINESE RULE: THE MING DYNASTY (A.D. 1368-1644)

### INTRODUCTORY

THE dynasty that Chu Yuan-chang founded was denominated Ming, which may best be translated "brilliant" or "glorious." To a certain degree it lived up to the implied promise. The genius of the period lay largely in being practical and efficient. From the military standpoint, the Ming was stronger than any native Chinese ruling house since the T'ang. It became the master of all of what we call China proper, as the Sung had never done. It interfered in Mongolian affairs and for a time held portions of what is now the New Dominion. It made its power felt as far south as Ceylon. Its form of government was, with slight changes, taken over by its successor, and was to last into the twentieth century. In culture leading achievements were in the applied arts. There was much building. The manufacture of cotton cloth greatly increased. In philosophy no radically new schools were developed, but there was vigorous loyalty to accepted ideals,

However, the Ming only partly deserved its title. It was nevei able to extend its boundaries to those occupied by the Han and the T'ang. In government it was content to perpetuate, witli modifications, the machinery of its predecessors. Under it tin Empire was elegant, wealthy, and populous, but only here and there displayed a tendency to break out creatively

into new channels. Neither in intellectual nor in artistic achievement did the China of the Ming display the originality of the T'ang and the Sung. The very success with which the dynasty drove out the Mongol and reestablished the cultural and administrative structure of China's past militated against innovations. Unity and internal peace seemed not to be consistent with experimentation.